

2004) as evidence that *Microcerotermes serrula* (Desneux) is now 'widely accepted and used extensively'. It should be noted that this name should not be considered as published in Jones et al. (2003), since it only appears in an electronic supplement, explicitly excluded by Article 9.8. This sounds like circular reasoning. Furthermore, Jones's application raises an ethical issue, since it is not independent from his own and his co-workers' interests: a positive decision of the Commission in this case would constitute an endorsement of their post-2000 use of invalid names, which otherwise could not be justified.

In conclusion, we believe: (1) that because the involved names were so infrequently used, our corrections (Roisin & Pasteels, 2000) did not result in 'considerable confusion and nomenclatural instability' (as stated by Jones: BZN 64: 83, abstract); (2) that because our explicit, published decision was correct and consistent with the Commission's guidelines, it should be upheld for the sake of nomenclatural stability; and (3) that to counter nomenclatural anarchy and discourage negligence, the Commission should refrain from endorsing *a posteriori* an erroneous use of names by the applicant or his co-workers. We therefore recommend that Jones's application be rejected.

Comment on the proposed fixation of the feminine gender of the genus and the form of derivation of family-group names based on *Trachys* Fabricius, 1801 (Insecta, Coleoptera)

(Case 3335; see BZN 63: 172–176, 273–274; 64: 64–66)

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I disagree with the proposal to fix the gender of the genus *Trachys* Fabricius, 1801 as feminine and agree with the opposing comments made by Bellamy, MacRae, Rifkind and Wescott. However, in my opinion, some additional points need to be made.

In the case of the genus *Trachys* Fabricius, 1801, a quick look at any Classical Greek dictionary will show that the word *trachýs* is the nominative singular form of an adjective having three different forms: masculine *trachýs*, feminine *tracheía*, and neuter *trachý* and meaning "rough". According to Article 30.1.2, the Fabrician genus is masculine, since there is no negation of Latin or Greek in Fabricius's work for this genus, which could be the only exception admitted, according to Article 30.1.4.1. The authors of the case apparently discard any resort to Article 30.1.4.2, since there is no possibility of considering the Greek word *trachýs* as of common or variable gender: it is clearly masculine. The word *trachýs* belongs to a peculiar kind of Greek adjective: it is a very short class of adjectives ending in masculine in *-ys* (not in *-achys* as MacRae and Rifkind say), but very frequent in zoological genus-group names. Of the 29 regular members and the three irregular members, 14 in their "pure" state are used as genera (*Amblys*, *Bathys*, *Brachys*, *Brithys*, *Drinys*, *Elachys*, *Eurys*, *Ithys*,

Ocys, *Pachys*, *Prays*, *Tachys*, *Thrasys* and *Trachys*), and 20 as the final element in compounds (only 12 have never been used as such). The total number of genus-group names is 430. Bellamy's, Macrae's and Rifkind's mention of genera having the same ending and the same problem is thus very short. If such an exception of the rules is allowed, what will happen with these genera? Should we apply the same gender and the same stem to these? If not, what are the consequences to our need for simple rules of nomenclature for the scientific community?

I agree that Fabricius used feminine endings for adjectival species names in combination with *Trachys* in the original description. The authors want to see in this a particular wish of Fabricius. I consider they ignore the most obvious explanation: Fabricius carried the feminine gender of *Buprestis* to his new genus, by mistake (*B. minuta*, *B. pygmaea* and *B. nana* were among the combined species in his treatment), my opinion being here in agreement with Wescott's. But see also below for another explanation.

For substantiation of their argument that most uses listed by them are feminine (para. 3 of the application), the authors give a list of references using *Trachys* as feminine or masculine, including several catalogues. Curiously enough, in no part of Article 30, can the reader find that "prevailing usage" could be invoked to reverse the rules there included. In this respect, Article 30 is solid. This "prevailing usage" can be invoked for reversal of precedence and other instances, but not here. Should authors who accurately follow the rules of the Code be ignored because there are many more authors who don't follow the rules? The Glossary of the Code states that prevailing usage must be understood as that "adopted by at least a substantial majority of the most recent authors". I cannot see a **substantial** majority following usage as feminine among recent authors, i.e., those publishing in the 20th century, which, according to the authors (para. 3) were: Kerremans, Théry, Jakobson, Schaefer, Obenberger, Kurosawa, Descarpentries, Villiers, Rikhter, Alexeev, Bílý, Burakovski and Bellamy (13) versus Bedel, Théry, Schaefer, Horion, Harde, Bílý, Cobos, Curletti, Köhler, Klausnitzer, Arnáiz Ruiz (11) using masculine. As anyone can see, some authors seem to be hesitant about gender use, including one of the authors of the proposal. It is rather evident that the latter followed the rules of the then extant Code, while the former did not.

To reinforce their argument, the authors state that "we should accept '*Trachys*' as a non-standard name", because "he used a *feminine* genitive *Trachydis*" (my italics) (para. 1.2). The first statement is a subjective appreciation, grounded only on others' opinions (e.g. Harold, 1870) and not on facts. In fact, Fabricius's *Systema Eleutheratorum* is written in acceptable Latin, and all the genera originally described there are perfect Latin or Greek words. However, genitive formation is very important to ascertain the stem for family-group name derivation. I cannot support Bellamy's statement that the genitive of *trachýs* is *trachyos*. The reasons are as follows: Greek adjectives ending in *-ys* belong to a wider class of nouns and adjectives. Buck & Petersen (1944) distinguish two kinds of Greek adjectives or substantives having a *-y-* stem:

1. The first one (with masculine form ending in *-ys* and neuter form ending in *-y*) make their genitive singular in *-yos*, *-eōs* or *-eos*. In this class, there are adjectives (of the type *trachýs*) and substantives, either masculine (*bótrys* "bunch of grapes", *présbys* "old man", *ichthýs* "fish"), feminine (*chélys* "tortoise", *ixýs* "waist", *ophrýs*

“eyebrow”) or neuter (*pôy* “flock”, *sinèpy* “mustard” and the Homeric versions of *góny* “knee” and *dóry* “spear”); the number of words in this class is very high.

2. The second class is composed of about 13 elements (some of which also have an alternative declension following the first class) that make their genitive singular in *-ydos*. It includes only two adjectives (*sýgklyys* “washed together by the waves (metaphorically)”) and *épēlyys* “incomer, stranger” and its derivatives, both invariable, together with feminine (*dagýs* “wax doll”, *chlamýs* “short mantle”, *emyýs* “freshwater tortoise”, *pēlamýs* “young tuna”), common (*sýnēlyys* “companion” and other substantivised derivatives of *-ēlyys* and *sýgklyys*) and masculine (*pábmys* “Lydian king”, also a proper male name) substantives.

Latin dictionaries (I have used the classical one by Lewis & Short (1980)) give a few words ending in *-ys* in the nominative singular. All these words are of Greek origin (cf. Liddell & Scott, 1996) and usually retain the Greek declension, including the genitive. Only four words have been found in Latin literature ending in *-ys* and having an ending in *-ydis*: *aclyys* (“small javelin”), *chlamys* (“military cloak”), *emyys* (“freshwater tortoise”) and *pelamys* (“young tuna”). All four are feminine in gender and belong to the 3rd Latin imparisyllabic declension, although usually they retain the Greek transliterated declension, or, in the case of *chlamys*, adopt a preferred Latin structure, *chlamyda*, *-ae* (1st Latin declension). This ending *-ydis* is a Latin adaptation of the original Greek 3rd declension genitive for dental stems *-ydos*.

It is clear that the argument presented by Bílý & Kubáň that the genitive ending *-ydis* is feminine is false, as it can be originally in Greek a part of the masculine, feminine or common paradigm (as *-ydos*) and that only chance is responsible for the only three Greek words of this class passing into Latin being feminine (and belonging to the subclass having a smaller number of representatives). In fact, 3rd Latin declension for non-Greek words includes exactly the same genders (apart from neuter): masculine, feminine or common. Probably this fact again led Fabricius to consider mistakenly that in Latin, *trachys* should follow the declension paradigm of the other three Greek words known to be introduced into Latin, namely, *chlamys*, *emyys* and *pelamys*, while the correct genitive form should have been *trachéos*. However, the ending *-ydis* cannot reveal anything about gender in a word unless you check the nominative in a dictionary, except that the word should keep the original Greek gender.

The genitive form of adjectives of the *trachýs* form is *trachéos* (Buck & Petersen, 1944, p. 19) and not *trachyos* as stated by Bellamy, the ending *-yos* belonging only to nouns of the same class. However, what is its stem for forming family-group names? The first problem is the meaning of the word *stem*, which is different in its philological and zoological concepts. While the latter is clearly diagnosed in the Glossary of the Code as “that part (or the whole) of the name of the type genus to which is added a family-group suffix” and its correlated *genitive ending* as “the letters at the end of the genitive case of a Latin or Greek generic name which are deleted [Article 29.3] to form a stem, before adding a suffix to form a family-group name”, the fact is that we still do not know which letters should be deleted as an “ending”. Or, to say it clearly, we are not aware that the zoological concept of stem does not coincide with the philological concept of stem, and from there the different interpretations start. To limit myself to the word in question, the word in genitive shows a root (*trach*), a root suffix (*e*) (present in all cases except nominative,

accusative and vocative singular) and a genitive case ending (*os*). However the philological stem is still *trachy-* (the group of words having a *y* as the final letter of the stem share peculiar morphological traits in their declension) while the Glossary of the Code defines as zoological stem *trache-*. It is clear that the next Code should address this disparity in criteria. The same premises must be taken into consideration when treating other genera derived from the same class of adjectives, and, consequently, of genera ending in *-ys* listed above. Bílý & Kubáň are inconsistent in recognising a genitive *Trachydis* and not a stem *Trachyd-* in this case, following Article 29.3.1, as Reitter (1911) did, probably following Article 4 of the *Règles* then in force. Since the Glossary is mandatory, I propose here the following amendment to the application:

The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to rule that, for zoological purposes, the stem of the genus *Trachys* is *Trache-*, according to the mandatory dispositions of the Glossary;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Generic Names in Zoology the name *Trachys* Fabricius, 1801 (gender: masculine), type species by subsequent designation by Westwood (1838) *Buprestis minuta* Linnaeus, 1758;
- (3) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *minuta* Linnaeus, 1758, as published in the binomen *Buprestis minuta* (specific name of the type species of *Trachys* Fabricius, 1801);
- (4) to place on the Official List of Family-Group Names in Zoology the name TRACHEIDAE Laporte, 1835 (type genus *Trachys* Fabricius, 1801), a corrected original spelling, according to (1) above;
- (5) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Family-Group Names in Zoology the following names, as incorrectly derived from *Trachys* Fabricius, 1801:
 - (a) TRACHISIDAE Laporte, 1835 (an incorrect original spelling);
 - (b) TRACHYINAE Gavoy, 1897;
 - (c) TRACHYDINI Reitter, 1911;
 - (d) TRACHYINI Kerremans, 1893;
 - (e) TRACHYNINI Kraatz, 1869.

As a final reflection, I would like to say that the International Code of Zoological Nomenclature has clear rules about the interpretation of the gender of genus-group names in the dispositions of Article 30. Evidently, perfecting the Code is possible, but zoologists should aim at perfecting their activities as well. Perhaps one of the virtues lacking in many of us is subjection to rules. The Code is made for helping us in our everyday work, not to causing a loss of time and effort in fighting against it. The rule that this application tries to circumvent has been in force since 1905, so several generations of zoologists have had enough time to learn it and put it into practice. Departing from the rules is dangerous if we want to keep stability, because the exceptions create doubts, and insecurity is the seed of instability. If you find a genus *Trachys*, that according to the Code and the Greek dictionary is masculine, being used as a feminine genus, you can think either that it is a mistake and treat it as masculine or you realise that there could be some ruling of the Commission admitting this exception and look for it. In the second case, you lose your time and confidence in the simple rules of the Code, so that you cannot be sure they will work in all cases.

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Comments on the proposed precedence of *Buprestis angustula* Illiger, 1803 (Insecta, Coleoptera) over *Buprestis pavidus* Fabricius, 1793

(Case 3388; see BZN 64: 178–181)

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Although the 'priority purists' will disagree, I am in complete agreement and support Dr Jendek's application (Case 3388) to the Commission asking that they recognize *Agrilus angustulus* (Illiger, 1803) as having precedence over *Agrilus pavidus* (Fabricius, 1793) when these names are considered synonyms for the reasons stated.

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I write to register my support for the proposed precedence of *Buprestis angustula* Illiger, 1803 (Insecta, Coleoptera) over *Buprestis pavidus* Fabricius, 1793, as the matters of the case are presented thoroughly and completely.

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I support the application by Dr E. Jendek concerning the proposed precedence of the specific name *Agrilus angustulus* (Illiger, 1803) over *Agrilus pavidus* (Fabricius, 1793) because the former name has been used for two centuries for the most common